



Senate Finance Committee
March 8, 2022
SB 880/HB 656: Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Esteemed Members of the Finance Committee:

The National Safety Council (NSC) respectfully asks for favorable consideration of SB 880/HB 656, the SAFE Roads Act of 2022. This legislation, if passed, will improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in Maryland.

NSC is America's leading nonprofit safety advocate and has been for over 100 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace, roadway and impairment. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. Our more than 15,000 member companies represent employees at more than 50,000 U.S. worksites. NSC is proud to lead the national Road to Zero Coalition with the goal of eliminating roadway fatalities by 2050.

In 2021, early estimates show there were 555 motor vehicle-related deaths in Maryland, a 3% increase from 2019.¹ Preliminary estimates by NSC show there was a 9% increase across the U.S. in motor vehicle-related fatalities in 2021 compared to 2020.² These data reinforce the need to improve the safety of our roads for all road users.

This is especially true for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users. In 2019, 6,205 pedestrians were killed in traffic crashes in the U.S.³ Pedestrians are 1.5 times more likely than occupants of passenger vehicles to be killed in a car crash. From 2009 to 2019, the number of pedestrian fatalities increased by 51%.⁴ Nine out of 10 pedestrians would *survive* being struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 mph, while 9 out of 10 pedestrians would be *killed* at 40 mph.

Eliminating roadway fatalities requires massive, near-term gains in highway safety, and we must use every tool at our disposal to prevent crashes. SB 880/HB 656 will help achieve this by providing dedicated funding to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety infrastructure, requiring vulnerable road user countermeasures in both new and maintenance construction projects, and collecting better data around high risk road areas in order to implement measures to prevent future fatalities. NSC stands ready to support your public safety efforts. If you have any questions please contact Tara Leystra, NSC State Government Affairs Manager, at 202-445-3121 or tara.leystra@nsc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorraine Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lorraine Martin
President and CEO

¹ <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/overview/preliminary-estimates/data-details/>

³ https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pedestrian_safety/index.html

⁴ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/road-users/pedestrians/data-details/>